United Nations A/CN.10/PV.240

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission
240th meeting
Friday, 1 December 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Zarif ..... (Islamic Republic of Iran)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chairman: I declare open the 2000 organizational session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission is convened today for a brief session to deal with its organizational matters, including the election of a new Bureau for 2001 and the adoption of a draft provisional agenda for the next substantive session. As far as the appointment of the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission is concerned, we are going to take up this issue later.

Adoption of the agenda (A/CN.10/L.47)

The Chairman: There is one correction to the provisional agenda, contained in document A/CN.10/L.47. Item 4 should read: "Review of the resolution adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly relating to the Disarmament Commission".

As I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda contained in document A/CN.10/L.47.

It was so decided.

Election of officers

The Chairman: As delegations are aware, on the basis of the established principle of rotation, it is the turn of the Group of Western European and Other States to nominate the candidacy for the chairmanship of the Commission for the 2001 substantive session.

It is my understanding that intensive consultations are still being carried out in the regional group with regard to the candidate for this post. I would suggest, therefore, that this item be taken up at a later date. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that delegations agree with this procedure.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Allow me now to proceed with the election of other members of the Bureau, namely, eight Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. In this connection, I would like to announce the following: first, the Group of Asian States endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Hiro Bahadur Thapa of Nepal for the post of Vice-Chairman; second, the Group of Eastern European States endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Giorgi Vassilev of Bulgaria for the post of Vice-Chairman; third, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States will announce their two candidacies. I call on the representative of Brazil to announce their names.

Mr. Cordeiro (Brazil): After consultations until midnight yesterday, Brazil, as the coordinator for Latin America, is honoured to announced the names of Counsellor Roberto Lema of Bolivia and Minister Counsellor Diane Marie Quarless of Jamaica as the

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candidates of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Chairman: The Group of African States and the Group of Western European and other States do not have any candidates for the post of Vice-Chairman. If I hear no comment, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect the representatives of the above-mentioned countries as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission at its 2001 substantive session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Allow me, on behalf of the Commission and the Bureau, to warmly congratulate the newly elected officers and to wish them success in discharging their duties. Based on consultation among the members of the Bureau, I invite Mr. Giorgi Vassilev of Bulgaria, Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, to take the Chair.

Mr. Vassilev (Bulgaria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The Acting Chairman: Allow me to express my gratitude for my election as a Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and for the important task entrusted to me to chair this organizational session.

Let me, on behalf of the Bureau, make some general observations and say a few words on our future work. The 2001 disarmament calendar is rich with events, and they are well known to the members of the Commission. We believe that the present international climate is propitious for a wide variety of undertakings in the field of disarmament. We hope that this overall atmosphere will positively influence the work of the Disarmament Commission. Without exaggerating last year's achievements, one can note with satisfaction that a solid foundation was laid in the Working Groups. Being conscious of the existing obstacles, we consider consensus on the difficult issues before the Commission feasible and attainable. This in turn makes the job of representatives much more challenging and intellectually stimulating. We hope that the Chairmen of the Working Groups will continue their superb efforts towards consensus-building.

To be successful in discharging our duties, the members of the Bureau will count on the support and cooperation of members of the Commission, including the Secretariat.

Now I would like to turn to the election of the Rapporteur of the Commission. The candidate for the post should come from the Group of Asian States. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Group has nominated Mr. Ko Ko Shein of Myanmar to the post of Rapporteur. If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Ko Ko Shein of Myanmar as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission for 2001 by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman: I would like to invite Mr. Ko Ko Shein to take his place as Rapporteur.

I wish to extend my warm congratulations to the Vice-Chairmen elected and the Rapporteur on their election to their offices of responsibility. I am sure that they will make an important contribution to the smooth conduct of work in the coming year.

It is my understanding that consultations are still being carried out within the regional groups with regard to their candidacies for the remaining four posts of Vice-Chairmen. Therefore, I would suggest that this issue be taken up at a later stage, together with the election of the Chairman of the Commission.

As members are well aware, on 20 November 2000 the General Assembly adopted, under agenda item 75 (a), resolution 55/35 C, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", which has specific bearing on the work of the Commission. For the sake of clarity and for the benefit of the members of the Commission , I would like to refer to that resolution. The relevant paragraphs of the resolution read as follows:

> "5. *Recommends* that the Disarmament Commission, at its 2000 organizational session, adopt the following items for consideration at its 2001 substantive session:
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> (a) Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament;
>
> (b) Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms;
>
> 6. *Requests* the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2001 and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session".

The resolution I have just outlined has direct relevance to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

If no delegation wishes to make a statement at this stage, we shall proceed.

Draft provisional agenda for the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

The Acting Chairman: The draft provisional agenda for the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is contained in document A/CN.10/L.48. Fortunately, as members will see from that document, there are no blank spaces in the proposed agenda. I suggest that we formally adopt the draft provisional agenda.

If no delegation wishes to comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft provisional agenda for the 2001 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.48.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman: The Commission is also invited to take note of document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.1, containing the provisional programme of work.

If no delegation wishes to comment on this document, we shall proceed to consider some organizational matters.

Organizational matters

The Acting Chairman: As members may recall, last year's decision to reduce the 2000 session of the Disarmament Commission from three to two weeks was taken on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent for the future. This year, the Commission will revert to its usual practice of having full three-week sessions. With this in mind, the Secretariat has arranged for the 2001 substantive session to take place from 9 April to 27 April 2001. These dates were arrived at by taking numerous factors into consideration, particularly the disarmament calendar for next year.

If no delegation wishes to comment, I shall take it that the Commission agrees to hold the 2001 substantive session from 9 April to 27 April.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman: As we have just considered the provisional agenda for the 2001 substantive session, let us address the establishment of the Working Groups to deal with the two substantive agenda items. I suggest that we re-establish Working Groups I and II to deal with the two specific items on our agenda. Moreover, as in previous years, we will have to establish the Committee of the Whole to deal with other substantive and organizational matters.

If there are no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to establish these three bodies.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman: I should like to note that, according to the provisions of the adopted reform programme, all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Fortunately, we do not have to deal with the appointment of the two Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies, since the Chairpersons from last year, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana and Ms. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, will continue in this capacity for the whole three-year cycle of consideration of agenda items, in accordance with the decision taken in 1998.

However, there are several issues pending at this stage, namely, the nomination of candidates for the remaining posts of Vice-Chairman. As mentioned earlier, this process will require some time to be finalized. Accordingly, it might be advisable for the Commission to suspend this organizational session until a later time so that delegations can carry out further consultations on these remaining issues.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to suspend the 2001 organizational session at this stage and to resume it at a later date.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to urge regional groups to proceed with their consultations on an urgent basis and to submit their nominations as quickly as possible.

The next meeting of the Disarmament Commission will be announced in the *Journal* of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.